

Kalaloch Area

Safe Harbor

The Kalaloch area offers a sampler of the variety of coastal habitat protected in Olympic National Park, from sandy beaches to rocky headlands. For millennia, these beaches likely offered a safe landing place for ancestors of area tribes. For thousands of sea creatures, these waters are still a safe haven.

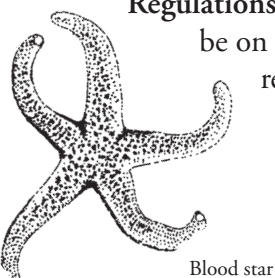
Olympic National Park protects 65 miles of wild coastline. Fortunately, the safe haven extends beyond the water's edge. The marine environment and off-shore islands are protected in partnership with three national wildlife refuges and the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary. The refuges manage the islands visible above high tide. Colonies of birds like common murre and tufted puffins rely on these rocky outposts for safe nesting habitat.

The marine sanctuary extends 20-50 miles offshore and 135 miles north to south. Sanctuary waters encompass nearshore kelp beds, subtidal reefs, rocky and sandy intertidal zones, submarine canyons and plankton-rich upwelling zones. Olympic National Park works with the sanctuary and refuges to preserve the rich diversity of life in these coastal waters. Life is not limited to tidepools, but spreads outward in all directions—a great, swarming sea of forms and processes whose nature we are only just beginning to understand.

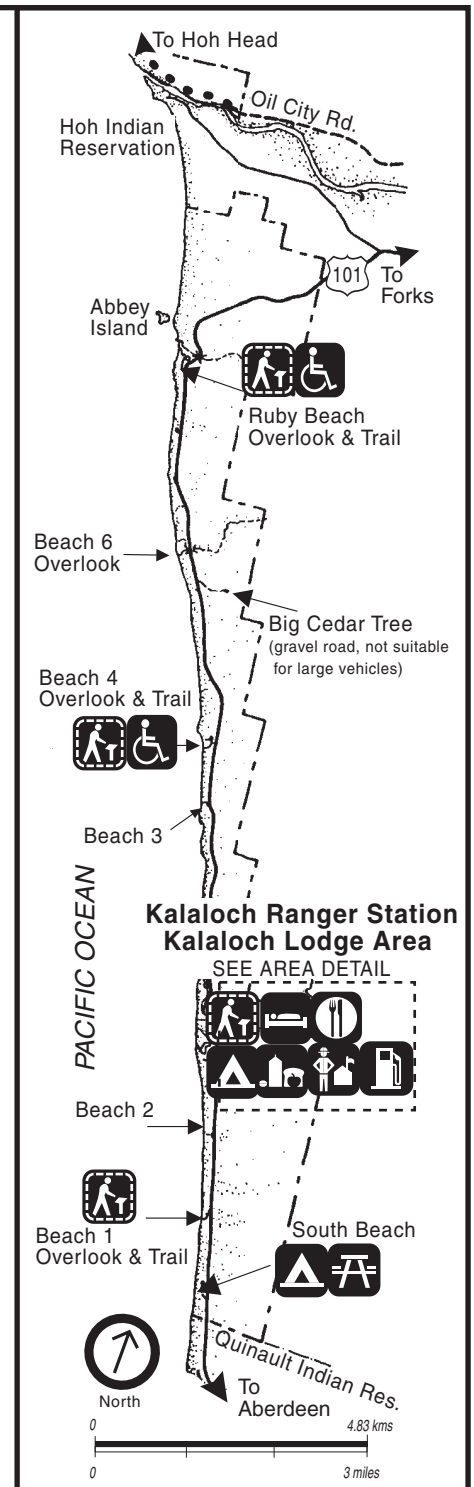
Kalaloch Area Information

- Facilities:** Kalaloch Ranger Station open daily in summer only. Information, exhibits, bookshop, maps.
- Concessions:** Kalaloch Lodge (360) 962-2271. Open year round. Cabins, lodge rooms, restaurant, gift shop, camp store, group campsite.
- Camping:** **Kalaloch** (open year-round): 166 sites (three accessible), fire pits with grates, picnic tables, potable water, accessible restrooms, animal-proof food storage, RV dump station (fee). Reservations in summer only; see www.recreation.gov or (877) 444-6777. **South Beach** (open summer only): 50 sites, picnic tables and fire pits, dirt road, flush toilets, BUT NO WATER (water available at Kalaloch campground dump station).

Regulations: Pets are allowed on Kalaloch area beaches. They must be on a leash at all times. For fishing and shellfish harvest, refer to state and park regulations.

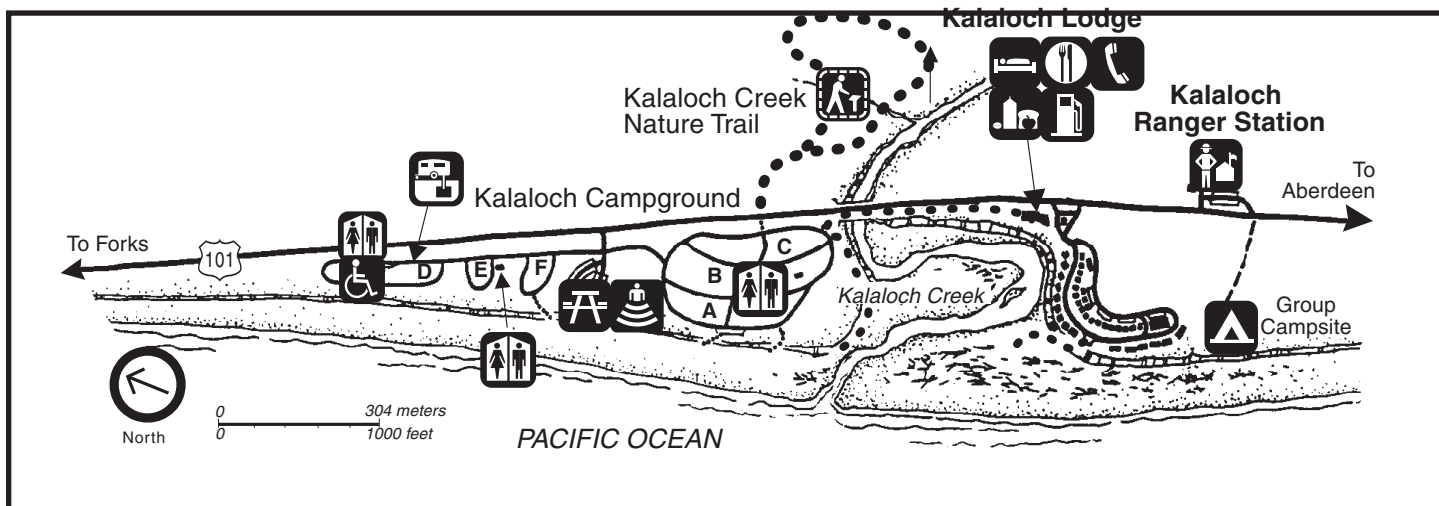


Blood star



Beach Logs and Riptides Kill!

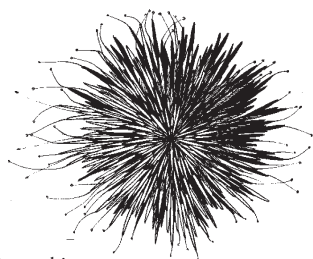
Powerful waves can roll and tumble logs. Do not play on beach logs, especially when the tide is high. Riptides are also dangerous. Swim at your own risk.



Day Hikes Around Kalaloch

Kalaloch Nature Trail: 1.0 mile easy loop through coastal forest, with stairs and elevation change less than 40 feet.

Beach Trails: Seven trails lead to the ocean from Highway 101. Ruby Beach and Beach Trail 4 have accessible viewpoints and accessible vault toilets. Beach 1 features fascinating spruce burls.



Sea urchin

Otters on the Rebound

Marine mammals are a special sight along Olympic National Park's coastal strip. Visitors commonly see harbor seals and harbor porpoises while spotting whales, dolphins and sea otters can be challenging.

Sea otters have the densest fur of any mammal and their thickly packed hair makes great insulation. This warm coat functions like a layer of blubber and maintains a sea otter's body temperature in our 40-50 degree waters, but this lush, valuable coat also made its wearer vulnerable to the voracious appetite of fur trappers from all over the globe.

By 1911, close to one million had been killed from Alaska to California and sea otters had disappeared from the waters off Washington, Oregon and southern British Columbia. Only a tiny group survived in California. Such marine mammal declines led to the first international treaty for wildlife conservation, a forerunner of the 1972 Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Studies revealed that sea otters were vital to maintaining a balance between kelp and urchin populations. Kelp forests protect the coast by absorbing the power of waves and provide valuable breeding grounds and nurseries for many creatures, including sea urchins, the otters' main food. Unchecked by sea otters, urchins multiply and devour kelp.

In 1969 and 1970, sea otters from Alaska were re-introduced on the Washington coast. Now over 1,200 sea otters live, play and hunt in these protected waters. With their return, kelp forests flourished, reviving vital habitat for many marine species. You might spot sea otters from overlooks in the park. Scan offshore kelp forests for otters entwined in the fronds, their furry heads camouflaged among the bobbing kelp floats. By continuing to protect their ocean habitat, we are creating a better home for all the creatures that benefit from the sea otter's rebound, from fish to birds.



If you see a sea otter on the beach, dead or alive, please report it to the ranger station.

